

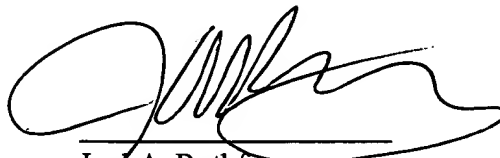
perforations and scores extending substantially from the first edge to the second edge, (c) applying a force substantially parallel to the length of the web sufficient to separate an individual sheet from the web at the line of weakness, (d) positioning the individual sheet over an absorbent sliver, (e) attaching the individual sheet to the absorbent sliver, (f) forming the absorbent sliver into a tampon blank, and (g) compressing the tampon blank to form a substantially cylindrical, compressed tampon having a cover comprising the individual sheet. The web has opposed first and second edges and a substantially infinite length.

Friese discloses a tampon for feminine hygiene having a cover formed of a liquid-permeable, thermoplastic strip section that is heat-sealed to a nonwoven ribbon section that forms the absorbent core. The strip section is further described as a non-woven material at column 2, lines 53-66. This reference is described in more detail in the present specification at page 2, line 27, through page 3, line 19.

The Office Action indicates that Friese “discloses the claimed method, including forming a line of weakness in the web of thermoplastic, liquid-permeable, apertured film”. However, the undersigned cannot find any reference to “apertured film” in the disclosure of Friese and would be grateful if the Examiner could highlight such a reference. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 USC §102(b) lacks at least one critical element. Further, because Friese teaches the use of a nonwoven strip section, one of ordinary skill in the art would not look to this reference for teaching process materials whose edges have a tendency, at the moment just after fracture, to “snap back” (recover), and disrupt the continuous process, as further described in the present specification at page 13, line 26, through page 14, line 28. For these reasons, Applicants believe that the rejections under 35 USC §§102 and 103 are inappropriate and should be withdrawn. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are earnestly solicited.

Applicants believe that the foregoing presents a full and complete response to the outstanding Office Action. Applicants look forward to an early notice of allowance for this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel A. Rothfus', written over a horizontal line.

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

This invention is related to the following copending applications: US Ser. No. \_\_\_\_\_, ~~filed June \_\_, 1999,~~ 09/345088, entitled "Tampon With Cover and Hydrophilic Additive" ~~(Attorney Docket, PPC 700);~~ US Ser. No. \_\_\_\_\_, ~~filed June \_\_, 1999,~~ 09/345090, entitled "Multilayered Apertured Film Wrapping Element for Absorbent Articles" ~~(Attorney Docket, PPC 691);~~ US Ser. No. \_\_\_\_\_, ~~filed June \_\_, 1999,~~ 09/345089, entitled "Heterogeneous Apertured Film Wrapping Element for Absorbent Articles" ~~(Attorney Docket, PPC 713);~~ US Ser. No. \_\_\_\_\_, ~~filed June \_\_, 1999,~~ 09/343760, entitled "Domed Tampon with Surfactant-Treated Cover" ~~(Attorney Docket, J&J 1810);~~ US Ser. No. \_\_\_\_\_, ~~filed June \_\_, 1999,~~ 60/141688, entitled "Sealing Roller and Sealing Roller Element, Particularly for Producing a Tampon for Feminine Hygiene and Method Therefore" ~~(Attorney Docket, J&J 1819);~~ and US Ser. No. \_\_\_\_\_, ~~filed June \_\_, 1999,~~ 60/141690, entitled "Tampon for Feminine Hygiene and Process and Apparatus for its Production" ~~(Attorney Docket, J&J 1820).~~ Production", all filed June 30, 1999.